

REMARKS

Claims 31 and 32 have been amended. No new subject matter has been added. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration in light of the following remarks. Claims 1-32 and 34 are pending.

Discussion of Claims Rejected Under 35 U.S.C. § 101

Claims 31 and 32 rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter. Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 31 and 32 have been amended to be clearly directed to statutory subject matter. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection.

Discussion of Claims Rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

In the Office Action, Claims 12, 14, 16, 18, 28, and 31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being unpatentable over Matsumoto *et al.* (U.S. Patent Pub. No. 2003/0159048). Matsumoto discusses a time stamping system for electronic documents. See Abstract.

Applicant respectfully submits that the cited art does not disclose the combination of elements recited in Claim 12. For example, the cited art does not disclose “a communication interface configured to communicate the original hash value to a recipient data processing apparatus before a predetermined event via a data communications network, and, after the predetermined event, to communicate the electronic document to the recipient data processing apparatus via the data communications network.”

Applicant does not necessarily agree that Matsumoto discloses communicating both an original hash value and the electronic document to a recipient data processing apparatus. However, Applicant respectfully submits that Matsumoto does not at least disclose that the original hash value is communicated to a recipient data processing apparatus *before* a predetermined event and the electronic document is communicated to the recipient data processing apparatus *after* the predetermined event.

Accordingly, at least for these reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 12 overcomes the cited art and is, therefore, in condition for allowance. In addition, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 28 and 31 are also in condition for allowance at least because of reasons similar to those discussed above with regard to Claim 12. Furthermore, Applicant does

not necessarily agree with the characterization and assessments of the art with respect to the dependent claims, and respectfully submits that the dependent claims are in condition for allowance at least because of the features they include from the independent claims from which they depend and because of their own features.

Discussion of Claims Rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-11, 13, 15, 17, 19-27, 29-30, 32, and 34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Matsumoto in view of one or more of Carro (U.S. Patent No. 7,117,367) and Zhao (U.S. Patent Pub. No. 2002/0122568).

Applicant respectfully submits that the cited art does not disclose the combination of elements recited in Claim 1. For example, the cited art does not disclose at least those features of Claim 12 discussed above with regard to Matsumoto alone. In addition, Applicant respectfully submits that the cited art does not disclose generating “an original super hash value from the plurality of the original hash values.” Applicant respectfully submits that in the cited art, a super hash value is not generated from other hash values. Furthermore, Applicant respectfully submits that the cited art does not disclose communicating “the original super hash to the plurality of document distribution devices.”

Accordingly, at least for these reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 1 overcomes the cited art and is, therefore, in condition for allowance. In addition, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 19, 26, 30, 32, and 34 are also in condition for allowance at least because of reasons similar to those discussed above with regard to Claim 1. Furthermore, Applicant does not necessarily agree with the characterization and assessments of the art with respect to the dependent claims, and respectfully submits that the dependent claims are in condition for allowance at least because of the features they include from the independent claims from which they depend and because of their own features.

Conclusion

Applicant has endeavored to address all of the Examiner’s concerns as expressed in the outstanding Office Action. In light of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections is respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions which may be answered by telephone, he is invited to call the undersigned directly.

Although the present communication may include alterations to the application or claims, or characterizations of claim scope or referenced art, Applicant is not conceding in this application that previously pending claims are not patentable over the cited references. Rather, any alterations or characterizations are being made to facilitate expeditious prosecution of this application. Applicant reserves the right to pursue at a later date any previously pending or other broader or narrower claims that capture any subject matter supported by the present disclosure, including subject matter found to be specifically disclaimed herein or by any prior prosecution. Accordingly, reviewers of this or any parent, child or related prosecution history shall not reasonably infer that Applicant has made any disclaimers or disavowals of any subject matter supported by the present application.

Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

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